



## *The President's Daily Brief*

~~Top Secret~~ 19 June 1968



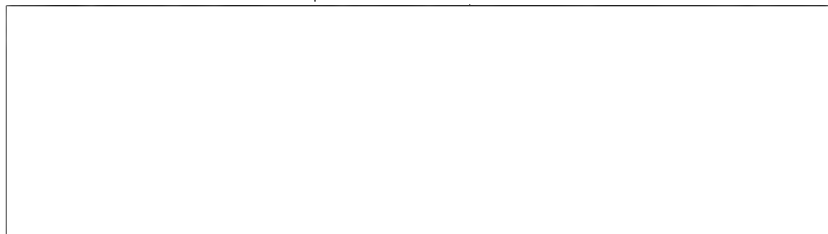
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THE PRESIDENT'S  
DAILY BRIEF  
19 JUNE 1968

1. West Germany

Willy Brandt traveled to East Berlin yesterday to talk for almost nine hours with the Soviet ambassador to East Germany. The trip was made at the ambassador's invitation, apparently to discuss East German moves against West Berlin.

2. South Vietnam



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3. Panama

With votes for the National Assembly still being counted, President-elect Arias is trying to sew up his coalition's control over it by rigging the results in two important provinces. He believes that otherwise his domestic programs and ratification of a canal treaty might go by the board. National Guard chief Vallarino is working behind the scenes to put in his own supporters. President Robles, now out of the picture, has apparently given up on blocking Arias and is making plans for a return to private life.

4. Guatemala

There are more rumblings of coup plotting by right-wing military officers. Their discontent stems from President Mendez' shakeup of the military hierarchy in late March.

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## 5. Sierra Leone

Leftists around Prime Minister Stevens are doing their best to persuade him that the West is out to torpedo his new government. The US has been the principal whipping boy of cabinet radicals and the press, and the cabinet is now debating the future of the Peace Corps.

The foreign minister says the government hopes to "coax" aid from the US, failing which it would be free to oust the corps. We would not be surprised to see it try to play both sides of the street. Like most African governments, it is hard up for cash.

## 6. Malaysia

Communist terrorists on 17 June killed 15 Malaysian police and wounded 14 others in an ambush near the Thai border. The attack marked the 20th anniversary of the start of the twelve-year Communist insurgency and was the biggest since its end.

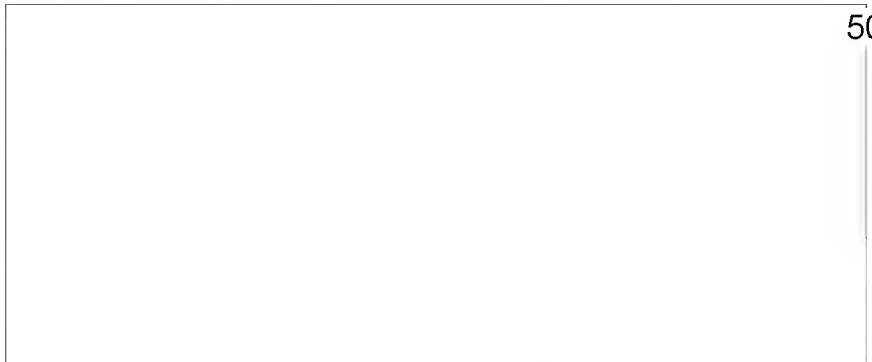
We do not believe that this signals a rebirth of the rebellion. It is a reminder, however, that a nucleus of the old movement remains, holed up mainly in southern Thailand and recruiting for the future.

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## 8. French Africa

France's ex-colonies in Africa are in for a period of belt-tightening. There will be considerable cutbacks in aid from Paris because of the domestic crisis.

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*FOR THE PRESIDENT'S EYES ONLY*

- 1.) Special Daily Report on North Vietnam
- 2.) North Vietnamese Reflections of U S  
Political Attitudes



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19 June 1968

Special Daily Report on North Vietnam  
for the President's Eyes Only

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I. NOTES ON THE SITUATION

Soviets Support Hanoi in Paris Talks: Moscow has authoritatively reiterated its full support for Hanoi at the Paris talks. An unsigned editorial article in the 17 June issue of Pravda states that Moscow stands behind Hanoi's demand for "an end to the bombing and other US acts of war against the North," and charges that the US is blocking progress at Paris by putting forward proposals for "reciprocity and de-escalation" on the part of North Vietnam. The piece concludes by alleging that a peaceful solution to the war is available if only Washington will match Hanoi's good will with concrete actions.

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Views of the Economy:

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[redacted] a  
shortfall in planted acreage for the spring crop, adulterated rice rations, and a high percentage of women cultivating rice paddies. Industry and agriculture have been seriously disrupted for at least two years, and rising levels of imports have been necessary to sustain daily life. For quite some time, the food ration has been adulterated by up to 40 or 50 percent with imported rice substitutes [redacted]

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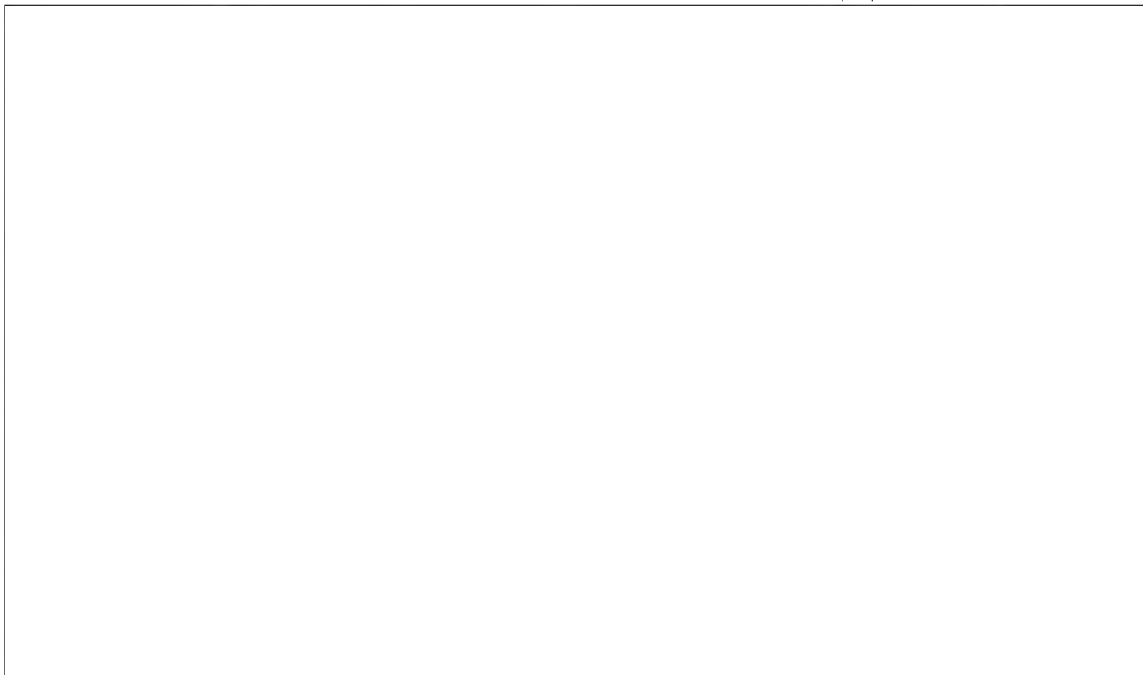
[redacted] Further food imports will be necessary to cover an estimated 200,000-ton shortfall in the spring harvest this year. The proportion of women in the agricultural labor force has always been high--60 percent before bombing began. The labor problem consists of a shortage of skilled workers, but foreign technical assistance has relieved some of the strain on skilled manpower.

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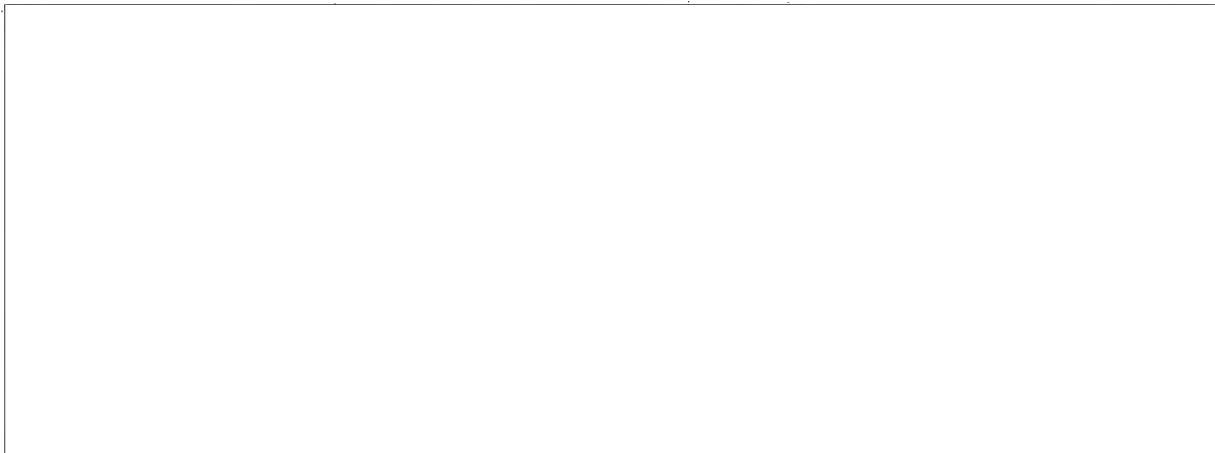
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Air Raid Alerts: North Vietnam is keeping its population on the alert against a possible resumption of air attacks north of the 20th parallel. According to press reports, air raid alarms went off in the capital area on Monday for the first time in months



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Czech Aid: Hanoi's Politburo-level aid mission has signed a military and economic aid agreement with Czechoslovakia which [redacted] includes both free assistance and long-term loans. Some of the economic items were disclosed: ship motors, diesel motors, trucks, tractors, bicycles, and medical supplies. In terms of military assistance [redacted] only "various kinds of capital investment" to strengthen the defense potential. The delegation is off to Berlin for its next stop.

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## II. NORTH VIETNAMESE REFLECTIONS OF US POLITICAL ATTITUDES ON THE WAR

There is nothing of significance to report.

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